

Lambda Letters Project

May 1993 Newsletter

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6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608

Phone (916) 965-6851

A LONG MARCH MAKES FOR A SHORT NEWSLETTER!

As you know, the March on Washington was held on Sunday, April 25th. Several of the Lambda Letters Project staff were in attendance at the March. By all accounts, the March was a smashing success and will have long term benefits for both public opinion and political support.

Since some of the staff were off to march (and play) in Washington, this month's newsletter will be somewhat abbreviated. We will be back with a full newsletter by next month.

Dear Vacant?

Last month some of you received three letters addressed to the Honorable Vacant. No, we weren't making a political statement about our legislators. Our data base lists each one of you and shows who your legislators are. If you live in a district where the legislative seat is currently vacant, the data base shows your legislator as vacant and that's what shows up when we print your letters. If you got dear vacant letters, that will change as soon as someone is elected to fill the vacant seat.

In the meantime, we apologize for any confusion that may have resulted from this situation. We are working on a possible solution. However, when you handle as much correspondence as we do, it's not easy to find a solution that can be done with the limited number of volunteers we have. Please be patient with us.

**Don't forget to attend
our annual auction on
May 16th!**

LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL ISSUE

URGE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TO LIFT THE BAN

Please write to the member of the Senate Armed Services Committee shown on the enclosed letter urging him to support an end to the ban on lesbians, gays and bisexuals in the military. Urge him to persuade other members of the committee to do the same.

You can remind him that retired Admiral William Crowe, former Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently said arguments against allowing lesbians, gays and bisexuals in the military are "generated more by emotion than by reason". He also said the military could adjust to their presence just as it has to minorities and women.

Admiral Crowe also said, "The charge that we shouldn't be involved in social change is a nice debating point [but] on the other hand the U.S. military since World War II has been in the forefront of social change, often against its own will".

Please respond to the argument that the military may lose heterosexual service people if lesbians, gays and bisexuals are allowed to serve openly. Point out that the service already discharges an average of 1,500 people per year because of their sexual orientation. Many of those discharged are highly decorated for outstanding military service. In addition many who might otherwise join the service, are not doing so now, because of the military's discriminatory policies. One of those people might be a potential General Eisenhower or MacArthur.

Urge the Senator to support an end to the military's policy of discriminating against lesbians, gays and bisexuals.

HIV DISEASE/AIDS ISSUE

**PELOSI INTRODUCES
COMPREHENSIVE HIV
PREVENTION ACT**

At the end of March, Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-Marin County) introduced HR 1538, The Comprehensive HIV Prevention Act of 1993.

This significant piece of legislation does for AIDS education and prevention activities what the Ryan White CARE Act did for the care of persons with HIV disease/AIDS. It gives control over funding to local groups to which agencies make proposals for various education and prevention activities. Despite initial opposition from the public health establishment, this local process, run by consortia which have many citizen members, has operated successfully under the Ryan White CARE Act.

To date HR 1538 has over thirty co-sponsors, including California Representatives Becerra, Eshoo, Hamburg, Lantos, Schenk, Waxman and Woolsey.

The goal of this legislation is to promote targeted and effective primary HIV/AIDS prevention programs; programs that should greatly reduce transmission and new infections of this devastating virus with its fatal consequences. HR 1538 will require the refocusing of federal, state, regional and local programs for planning, resource allocation, evaluation and technical assistance as related to HIV disease. The Ryan White CARE Act gives us an excellent model which could be used to carry out the intent of HR 1538.

We must remember that at the current time, and probably for the foreseeable future, primary prevention of the transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is our only effective weapon against the spread of this deadly virus. This prevention works best when it is specially targeted to local needs and norms. One of the best ways for this to occur would be under the proposed provisions of HR 1538 which gives control of HIV programs directly to those in the affected communities.

WOMEN'S ISSUE

ATHLETIC EQUITY BILL

Responding to stark evidence that women do not have equal opportunities to participate in college athletic programs at California State University campuses, State Senator Gary Hart has introduced SB 262. This bill would require the California State University system to increase athletic opportunities for women by having the same percentage of women in intercollegiate athletic programs as the percentage of full-time undergraduate women students enrolled at each campus by 1998-99. SB 262 would also establish a "Gender Equity Committee" made up of at least 50% women, to report annually to the legislature on the progress being made.

It has been more than 20 years since Congress passed Title IX, which requires that female students must be treated equally in public schools, colleges, and universities. The most recent report available from the CSU campuses covering 1988-89 shows that men now have 68% of the opportunities to compete and women have only 30% of the opportunities. The funding ratio is even worse. During the 1988-89 school year, men's teams received 75% of the funding and women's teams received only 25%.

Less than 33% of the scholarships awarded by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) schools go to female athletes. The result is that male college athletes receive approximately \$179 million dollars more in scholarships every year than their female counterparts.

Unless they are forced to comply with the law, discrimination against women in athletic programs at all levels will continue. SB 262 would ensure that discrimination against girls and women in the CSU system, a publicly funded educational system, be eliminated.

(TAKEN FROM THE CALIFORNIA NOW ACTIVIST.)

WOMEN'S ISSUES CONTINUED

WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY

The health of women has emerged as an issue which requires attention nationally and in California. Given California's diversity, it is critical that our agenda-setting be guided by comprehensive research. The California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research dedicated their efforts two years ago to improve women's health in our state. Their charge was to gather published data and prepare reports on the reproductive, physical, mental and occupational health. The reports offer a common starting point for leaders in our state to develop an agenda to improve the status of women's health in California.

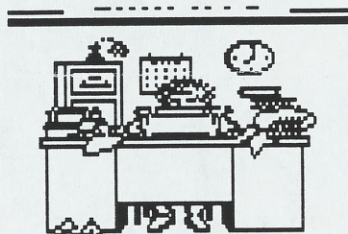
Too comprehensive to reproduce here, some of the key components of the reports include:

- ◆ Although there have been improvements in women's reproductive health, a crisis exists for the state's women of color. African-American women are at considerably greater risk than any other ethnic group for acquiring sexually transmitted diseases. AIDS is the fifth leading cause of death in 1991 among African-American women ages 25-34 in California.
- ◆ There has been a trend of increasing proportions of births to teens, single women, Latinas, and women over 40.
- ◆ African-American women have poorer birth outcomes than any other group. Recent health initiatives have not addressed the crisis in health care access for women prior to pregnancy, even though preconception health status strongly impacts pregnancy outcomes.
- ◆ Heart disease was the leading cause of death among California women in 1990-91. Cancer is the leading cause of early death among California women regardless of ethnicity.
- ◆ White women had the highest incidence of breast cancer, but only the second highest mortality rate. African-American women had the highest mortality rate from breast cancer, despite having higher rates of mammography and lower rates of incidence than white women.

We must urge our California legislators to pass policy that address more adequate research, access to health care, and greater prevention and treatment.

(TAKEN FROM THE CA WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT REPORTS.)

Newsletter Editor Needed



Due to increasing demands placed upon the time of our current newsletter editor, he has decided to put away his floppies and hang up his keyboard. Therefore, Lambda Letters is in urgent need of someone willing to take on this assignment.

The newsletter is published once a month. Articles for the newsletter are supplied by each of the members on the staff approximately four to seven days ahead of the printing deadline. The editor is responsible for layout of the articles.

Persons interested in volunteering in this capacity should have access to a computer with WordPerfect 5.1, a scalable font package, and a printer with graphics capability.

Anyone interested is encouraged to contact Boyce Hinman at (916) 965-6851.

THE MARCH GIVES US POLITICAL CLOUT!

Since the 1987 March on Washington, Congressional co-sponsorship of the federal gay and lesbian rights bill has increased dramatically.

	House	Senate
1985-86 Congress	73	6
1987-88 Congress	74	9
1989-90 Congress	80	12
1991-92 Congress	109	17

Plan to Attend
the
Annual Auction



To Benefit the
LAMBDA LETTERS
PROJECT



Featuring Entertainer
Karla Carmony

Sunday
May 16th
from 3:00 to 5:00 pm
at the
TOWNHOUSE RESTAURANT
1517 21st Street, Sacramento

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